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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies continued to focus news coverage January 15 on the devastating earthquake that hit Haiti Tuesday; on Google's threat to quit China; and on the year-end five city and county magistrate elections in Taiwan. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" and an op-ed in the China-focused "Want Daily" both discussed China's recent testing of its missile defense system. The "China Times" article said China's move is aimed at having a dialogue with the United States on an equal footing, while the "Want Daily" article said China is showing its ambition to possess both offensive and defensive capabilities. An editorial in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" discussed an article recently published by U.S. scholar Bruce Gillery on Taiwan being "Finlandized." The article argued that President Ma Ying-jeou's diplomatic truce policy is not equal to the "Finlandization" of Taiwan, as Taipei "does not servilely cater to Beijing's whim in the conviction that its people want above everything their country's dignity as a sovereign state called the Republic of China." End summary.

A) "[China's] Missile Interception Test Is Aimed at Seeking Dialogue with the United States on an Equal Footing"

Journalist Qi Leyi wrote in the "Beijing Observation" column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 120,000] (1/15):

"Beijing has made progress in its test of the ballistic missile interception [technology] on Monday. In addition to the breakthroughs in technology, the key significance of Beijing's test this time lies in the fact that it was releasing a political signal, telling the United States that on top of [China's influence in] the economic domain, no one should underestimate Beijing's space combat capability. Also, the move is an attempt by China to open the door to engage in a dialogue with the United States on an equal footing while the world is discussing the anti-missile topic. ...

"Some people believe that Beijing's proactive announcement of its test of the mid-range missile interception [technology] is related to Washington's recent decision to sell Taiwan the Patriot missile system. Given Beijing's line of thinking, this may be true, but [the protest against U.S. arms sales to Taiwan] may just be a supplementary effect. Beijing's fundamental idea was to use the global discussion of the anti-ballistic missiles to start a dialogue with the United States. In terms of economic issues, it is evident that the economic strengths of China and the United States are coming closer to each other. At least in the eyes of the world, it recognizes that China is a strong economic power. But when it comes to major military security issues, China has received far less 'respect' from Washington than the respect Russia gets from the United States; the gap gets even wider particularly when it comes to the sphere of space [technology]. Beijing launched an anti-satellite missile test in January, 2007, and that was a sign foreshadowing China's eagerness to seek to have an equal dialogue with the United States, or it will never be regarded as a real strong power if it only has economic strength but no military power. It is foreseeable that Beijing will conduct more and more similar

military tests in the future, until the United States recognizes Beijing as its real rival."

B) "Having Possessed Spears, China Also Wants to Acquire Shields"

Alexander Huang from the Graduate Institute of International Affairs and Strategic Studies, Tamkang University, opined in the China-focused "Want Daily" [circulation: 10,000] (1/15):

"... China has successfully launched the test of its 'ground-based mid-range missile interception technology' this week, ... which showed that Beijing has made strides in its missile precision and space weapon technology. Moreover, it is a declaration to the international community that China, by holding the spear in one hand and the shield in another, has the grand ambition to possess both offensive and defensive capabilities."

C) "Taiwan Is Not Beijing 'Finlandized'"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (1/15):

"... Washington was peeved by the current beef war across the Pacific. It decided to defer negotiations for a trade and investment framework agreement with Taipei in retaliation for Taiwan banning American ground beef and offal, but the trade conflict, according to the U.S. State Department, does not affect the sales of Patriot III ground-to-air missiles which Beijing strongly opposed. President Ma has put in place a diplomatic truce between Taiwan and China. It isn't the same as Finlandization. Taipei is cautious not to offend Beijing on purpose. However, it doesn't servilely cater to Beijing's every whim in the conviction that its people want above everything their country's dignity as a sovereign state called the

Republic of China. Remember why the people are against the American beef imports? Though mistakenly, they are calling a referendum to revoke the beef protocol in order just to show their country isn't a client state Uncle Sam can twist around his little finger. ..."

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